



# NEWSLETTER

## President's Letter

Dear MKR Society Friends –

Robert Frost starts his poem with the line, “Something there is that doesn’t love a wall...” His neighbor feels that, ““Good fences make good neighbors.”” But Frost’s speaker still wants to know, “What I was walling in or walling out.” Rawlings uses walls and fences in her work, leaving her readers to wonder what she is walling in and walling out. In *South Moon Under*, Lantry fences in his land before he begins planting, walling himself in and walling others out. In *The Yearling*, Jody builds the fence ever higher, attempting to wall Flag out of the corn. But fencing has changed in the years since. In the past, we fenced nature out of land we wanted to use, but today, we fence nature in, thinking that we can control her just by creating artificial barriers.

For Rawlings, the fence marks the boundary between settled space and natural space. The individual does not impose his or her will on the natural world; instead, the individual erects the fence to control, or try to control, just a small part of that world. To Rawlings, Nature is too big, too powerful to control completely, and one just needs to look at Lake Okeechobee for a tragic example. After the 1926 hurricane, everyone thought that building a levee around the lake would prevent death and destruction. Instead, during the 1928 hurricane, it caused the level of the lake to rise higher, causing the catastrophic destruction of South Bay, Belle Glade and Pahokee. To Rawlings, and her Cracker characters, Nature is a force and an entity to be studied and understood—not to be controlled or subdued. Rawlings knew that she did not own Cross Creek, but only borrowed it. One does not have to look hard to see that the prediction she made in *Cross Creek* came true—her orange groves have returned to the oak hammock that existed before people settled Florida. In like manner, if we can live with Nature instead of against her, natural Florida will survive and our quality of life will be enhanced.

### Announcements

- October 25: Trustees Meeting, Noon, Montverde, FL
- March 27- 28, 2015: 28<sup>th</sup> Annual MKR Conference, Florida Southern College, Lakeland, FL

—Steve Brahlék

**A Friendly Reminder:** Memberships were due on June 30. To check if your membership has lapsed, please check your mailing label. The following is the list of dues levels: \$30 Individual, \$40 family, \$50 Sustaining, \$100 sponsor, \$1000 life. Send membership renewals to Dr. Anne Pierce, 249 Herman Drive, Hawthorne, FL 32640.

**MKR Officers**

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**28<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Lakeland**

The next Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings conference will be held in Lakeland at Florida Southern College, March 27-28, 2015. The campus of FSC is a National Historic Landmark because it is the site of the largest collection of Frank Lloyd Wright structures in the world. Thirteen buildings, including the Hollis Room of the Buckner Building, were all designed by Wright and built between 1938-57. A highlight of the conference will be a tour of the Wright buildings. Dr. Keith Huneycutt, a professor of English, is assisting the Society with our conference arrangements. We look forward very much to spending time on the lovely FSC campus.

The conference hotel is the Terrace, located at 329 E Main Street, Lakeland, FL 33801. Phone: 863-688-0800. We have a conference rate of \$109 for a room and \$159 for a suite. This rate will be good until February 13, 2015. Please mention the Rawlings conference when you make a reservation.

There will be another Silent Auction at the conference. The last one in Gainesville was very successful, raising nearly \$1,000 for the Society's scholarship fund. Please notify the following trustees if you intend to donate any items:

Claire Koshar at [summerhillfcr@comcast.net](mailto:summerhillfcr@comcast.net)

Elaine Bradbury at [hhfsouth@embarqmail.com](mailto:hhfsouth@embarqmail.com)

**Conference Call for Papers**

The Society invites paper proposals for the upcoming conference on any topic related to Rawlings's life and works. Presentations should be around 20 minutes in length. Please send one-paragraph proposals to Anna Lillios at [Anna@ucf.edu](mailto:Anna@ucf.edu) as soon as possible (and no later than March 1).

**Journal of Florida Literature Call for Papers**

The journal seeks critical articles, creative fiction and non-fiction, poetry, book reviews, and notes in the spirit of or regarding the life and works of Rawlings, her circle, or other authors who use the state of Florida as a source of creativity. Please send your work to Anna Lillios at [Anna@ucf.edu](mailto:Anna@ucf.edu) by February 1, 2015.

## Remembering Dessie...

The Markers and Memorials Committee has historically placed bronze plaques on flat marble markers at the gravesites of those who were “immortalized in the writings of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings.” Those words are engraved on the bronze plaques. There is a list of these honorees on our Yahoo group web site created by Robert Davis.

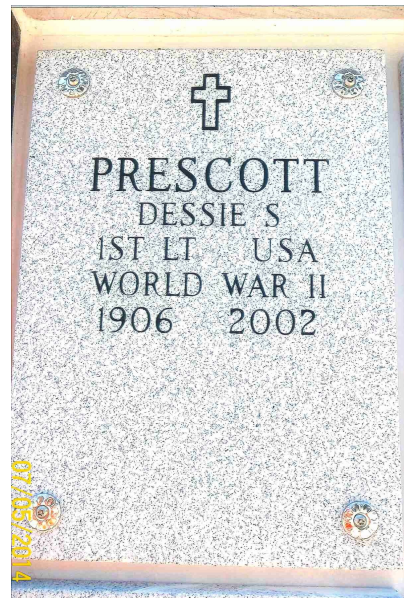
Dessie Smith Vinson Prescott was one of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings’s closest friends among the Cross Creek Crackers. She does not have a gravesite; her ashes, instead, repose in a niche in the Columbarium of the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, Florida. Why the National Cemetery? Well, Dessie was a WAC during WWII and a first lieutenant, no less. Rawlings wrote in her letters about some of Dessie’s visits during the war, when she brought five or six WACs with her.

After some correspondence with the director of the cemetery, we were given permission to plant a Southern Magnolia tree in her memory. Dessie once said that if “Marge” wrote about a magnolia blossom you could almost smell it. In the beginning, we were told that they have plenty of trees but were in need of flagpoles for their Avenue of Flags. We sent a check for a flagpole, as well. The tree was approved for the corner of a newer section, #605, and was supplied by Fuller’s nursery near the cemetery.

Rodger Tarr in *The Private Marjorie* describes Dessie as: “a Florida pioneer and barnstormer who offered friendship when MKR was struggling early in her career, and who taught her a great deal of Cracker lore. Dessie was one of MKR’s favorite hunting and fishing partners. MKR celebrated their now-famous trip down the St. Johns River in ‘Hyacinth Drift’ (1933).” She and Rawlings had quite a few fishing and hunting trips to Alaska, Cuba, the Everglades—along with quite a few escapades. [cont’d on page 4]



*Southern Magnolia in section #605 of the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, FL, planted in honor of Dessie Smith Vinson Prescott*



*Dessie Smith Vinson Prescott's Marker at Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, Florida*



## Remembering Dessie (cont'd)

One time they just avoided being caught by the Feds when they were down near the town of Christmas buying some "moonshine." Dessie attended one of our annual meetings held at St. Augustine beach in her later years. She had a wry wit and was a most entertaining speaker, telling of her fabulous life adventures beginning with building her own cabin at the age of sixteen and her first marriage (of six), which lasted only six weeks. We were all ears! She met again with us at an annual meeting held in Sanford. Society members Robert and Edwina Davis and Jim Stephens visited with Dessie at her Wahoo Ranch over on the Withlacoochee River and have many reminiscences of Dessie. Candace Booth, her caregiver for some years, is putting together some Dessie stories, which we look forward to reading.



*Avenue of Flags at Florida National Cemetery*

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

*Society Newsletter*

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### IS IT TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

Please check your address label. The date that you see on the label is the date your dues are due. If your membership is current, we thank you! Renewal card at:  
<http://rawlingssociety.org/>

